2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

PLATE VI

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Fashoda, Aturwic

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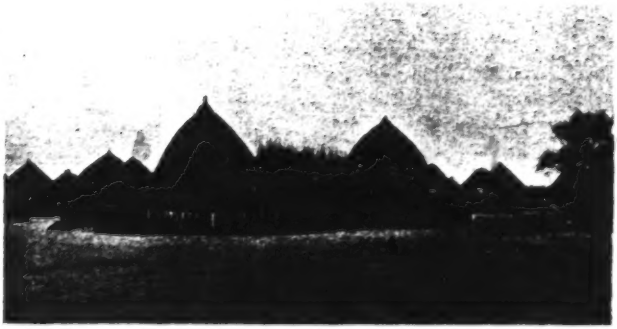

Akurwa, shrine of Nyakang in 1910

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
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classes of people, animals, and even things, in which Nyakang may be immanent or with which he is associated.

The chief incarnations and manifestations of Nyakang are as follows:—

1. The spirit of Nyakang is regarded as closely associated with certain shrines, which are in fact cenotaphs, for though spoken of as his tombs it is well known that he is not buried in any of them.

2. Each Shilluk king incarnates the spirit of Nyakang.

3. This is equally true of certain animals, and may possibly apply to all the members of particular species, as it certainly does to individual members.

4. The spirit of Nyakang is regarded as being present, at any rate at certain times, in his wooden effigy kept at Akurwa.

There are ten cenotaph "tombs" of Nyakang (*kengo Nyakang*) in the Shilluk country, the most important being at Akurwa and Fenikang. Each shrine consists of a group of two or more huts—of the same circular form but rather larger than dwelling huts—together with a small more or less circular enclosure, called *ludi*, neatly fenced with millet stalks. The huts are particularly well thatched, and the apex of the roof terminates in an ostrich egg from which there projects the blade of a spear, while the surrounding fence is kept in notably good repair. These huts, with the enclosed area, are sacred, for, with the exception of the priests of Nyakang and the old people concerned in keeping them clean, no one may enter the enclosure or even approach it without due cause. In 1910 the Akurwa shrine consisted of two huts, that at Fenikang of five, and these shrines, designed on the plan of a Shilluk homestead (with, however, the addition of the *ludi*), are so built because they are regarded as the homes of Nyakang.

The attendants and priests of the royal grave shrines and the cenotaph shrines of Nyakang are known as *bareth* (lit. "king's wife"). This term includes certain old men, who appear to have an hereditary connection with the shrine (but on this matter we are unable to be precise), ex-wives of kings, who having borne a reasonable number of children [1] or attained the menopause are sent to take charge of shrines, and men and women of advanced years who are liable to more or less epileptiform attacks, held to indicate possession by Nyakang or a dead king. The *bareth* keep the shrine clean, receive the sacrifices,

[1] Hofmayr states that the royal wives do not commonly bear more than three children; after this they are sent to a shrine and become *bareth* (op. cit., 140).

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

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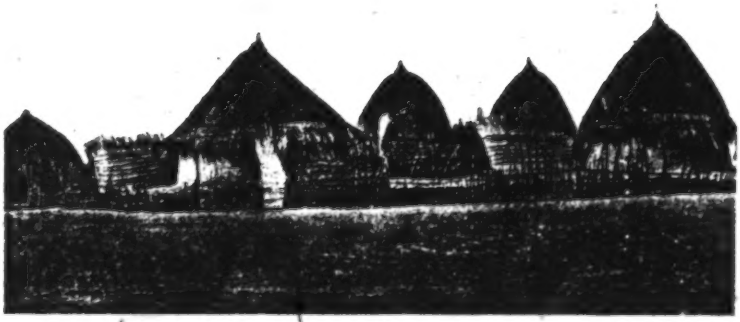
PLATE VII



Fenikang, shrine of Nyakang in 1910

Fenikang, shrine of Nyakang in 1922

(see p. 78

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

and officiate in the ceremonies, but it is perhaps true to say that only the beasts for minor sacrifices (recovery from illnesses, etc.) are killed by them. Hofmayr states that the distinctive mark of the *bareth* is a necklace of disc beads of ostrich egg-shell, but that they also wear anklets of glass beads, white and green. The *bareth* eat the flesh of the sacrifices and drink the milk of the cattle belonging to the shrine; they are responsible too for the disposal of the bones of the sacrifice, which they cast into the river.

The contents of the *kengo* vary, but they always include certain sacred spears, called *alodo*, representing those used by Nyakang and his companions.

In 1910 we were told that one of the five huts of the Fenikang shrine was in a special sense the house of Nyakang, which he was thought to inhabit. It was distinguished by a number of very rough paintings on its outer wall, some of which could be recognized as representing animals, but we could not learn that the paintings had any special significance. Before the door of the hut were a number of horns of the cattle slain in sacrifice (in 1911 wrongly described as elephant tusks), their broad ends thrust into the ground; within there were said to be skins on the floor, as if for Nyakang to rest upon. Some of the "spears of Nyakang" (*alodo*) are kept here, and there is in this shrine an extremely sacred stool, which may be kept in this hut or may be preserved with some of the sacred spears and a number of elephant tusks in one of the other huts of the shrine, used by the guardians and for storing the millet brought as offerings when the crop is cut. In 1921 we were struck afresh with the resemblance of the shrine to a homestead, with exceptionally large huts; it had been rebuilt since 1910, when we first visited Fenikang, and there were now no horns in front of any hut. At this time (1921) the shrine had been entrusted by the king to the care of a most intelligent elderly Dinka woman, by name Aker—widow of the kings Kur and Fadiet—who was the chief priestess of the shrine. She had three huts and a cattle byre near the shrine; in one hut she kept her beer, and here millet was ground, the two others were for her slaves, who as well as her cattle were provided by the king. We are not certain whether she ever slept in the shrine. According to Shilluk custom Aker had left Kodok during her two pregnancies, but on neither occasion had she been sent to Fenikang; it is, indeed, improbable that a royal wife would be sent to a village containing a shrine, as it might be difficult to accommodate her cattle and those of the shrine attendants as well as the village beasts,

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

of the shrine attendants as well as the village beasts. The priestesses of these shrines are probably chosen entirely for their efficiency, and we had full opportunity to note the excellent manners and forcible character of our friend Aker.

The clans Golobogu and Pameiti are closely associated with the upkeep of the Fenikang shrine, indeed the Golobogu clan, and probably to a lesser extent the Pameiti, act as caretakers of the shrine and when sexually pure can enter it freely. Children of these clans before the age of puberty and men in a state of chastity may enter the shrine, but if a man should do so after sleeping with a woman he would die. A married man whose wife is pregnant will in all probability be living chastely, and such men were seen entering the shrine without comment being made by the villagers. The chief (*jago*) of the local group of clan Golobogu always kills any beast that may be sacrificed at the shrine. Aker said that this man, one Ayurial, had instructed her in her duties as priestess of the shrine; it was, however, evident that Aker was of more importance than Ayurial, though how much this may have been due to force of character could not be determined.

The different functions of the huts constituting the shrine further indicate that the pattern of the original shrine was a homestead and that the shrine itself is the homestead of Nyakang. The information we give concerning the huts composing the shrine—each having its own name—is in part the result of our inquiries at Fenikang in part additional information provided by Mr. Heasty.

The names of the huts are: Nyikayo, Kwayo or Duwad, Wed Mac, Dag or Kwayo,[1] Duwol.

Nyikayo was the hut in which lived the mother of Nyakang; here millet was said to be stored.

Duwad was the name of the hut in Nyakang's homestead in which Nyakang used to sleep; whence the name Kwayo, the word used of royalty for "sleep" (other folk *nin*). This is the most sacred hut of the shrine, shown on Pl. VIII with the horns of sacrificed beasts in the ground before its door. In it are kept the former possessions of Nyakang, his stool—alleged to be of metal with "eyes", i.e. probably having its seat spotted as a leopard-skin—his drum, and his lyre (*thom*) said to have a metal body. Beside these are eight

[1] The reason for two of the huts having the same name is that, as will be seen immediately, both were sleeping places. Alternate names at Fenikang for Nyikayo and Wed Mac were Nagoja and Kejo respectively.

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

346
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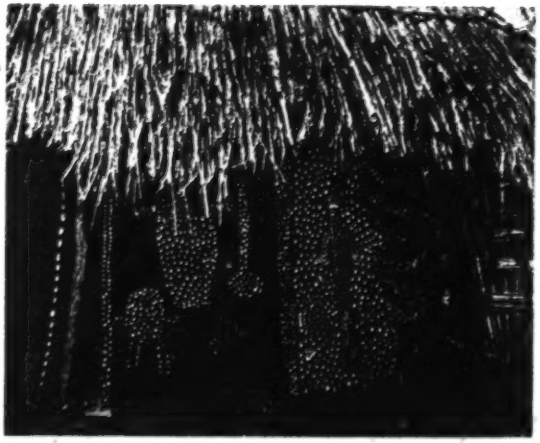
PLATE VIII

Fenikang, shrine of Nyakang in 1910, Kwayo (Duwad)

[532]



Fenikang, shrine of Nyakang, wall-paintings

[from p. 80

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

778 gourds, seven articles described as plates—white and red, two very
346 large—seven similar but smaller articles, copper cooking vessels, many
Shilluk clay pots, and four elephant tusks; sacred water is also kept
here. This is the hut which Nyakang himself is thought to visit at
[776] night, arriving as a wind; music heard coming from the hut as he
plays his lyre (*thom*) is taken as evidence of his presence, and the
feeling that he still protects his people is vastly strengthened by
these visits. This hut was said to be built by the chief of the
Nyelwal sub-district in which is Fenikang.

Wed Mac contains the cooking pots of Nyakang, and here fire is made and food cooked.

Dag, or Kwayo, represents the hut in which Dag slept.

Duwol—also called Nyakang—was the hut before which Nyakang
[692] heard disputes, and the *reth* still sits in front of it and hears cases when
he visits Fenikang. Mr. Heasty was told that the small children
of the village might sleep in this hut when mosquitoes were bad,
and at Fenikang it was said that four tusks were kept here.

The *ludi* is stated to be a place for the king, where he may urinate and perhaps bathe.

782 The worship of Nyakang at Fenikang and his other shrines consists
796 of a solemn ritual of sacrifice and prayer. We know of the following
occasions for ceremonial worship; no doubt there are others of which
we did not hear, and we do not doubt that sacrifice would be made
in any threat of national danger or disaster. We give in brief outline
accounts of the two most important annual ceremonies:—

[805] 1. The rain-making ceremony held before the rains at the beginning
of the month *alabor*, at the new moon (the Shilluk calendar is lunar).

2. The harvest festival held when the millet is cut, i.e. about the end of the rains.

At the rain ceremony a cow and a bullock are given to Nyakang,
the latter being killed and the former added to the herd belonging
[643] to the shrine. Both should be given by the king, who at the Fashoda
shrine himself takes part in the ceremony. The bullock is slain
with a sacred spear by one of the *bareth* before the door of the shrine
enclosure, while the king stands near the beast praying loudly to
Nyakang for rain and holding a spear pointing upwards. After the
meat has been eaten by all the *bareth*, the bones and as much blood
as can be collected in a gourd are thrown into the river, and the skin
is made into a mat for Nyakang. Much of the millet preserved in

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

PLATE IX

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Dura-bird ceremony, sacrificial bull at shrine of Nyakang

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Fenikang, shrine to Deng

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

and habitat. The spirits of the bush are we believe in the main unimportant, but the river people and their river cattle play a more considerable part in the mythology of the people. One of the groups of people whom Nyakang found in the land were fish-men, or river-men with the power of turning into fish, while the mysterious cows whose dung provided the "ashes of denying" (p. 102) had their original home in the river.

It is convenient to consider the cult of the dead Shilluk kings apart from that of Nyakang at his cenotaph shrines, but it must be remembered that in every king there is immanent the spirit of Nyakang, so that the worship rendered them at their grave shrines is ultimately only part of the cult of Nyakang.

Like the cenotaph shrines of Nyakang the royal grave shrines are called *kengo*, as opposed to the graves of commoners for which the word is *roro*.[1] Though smaller, they resemble the shrines of Nyakang in appearance, for the roofs of their constituent huts terminate in ostrich egg and spear-head. The guardians or priests (*bareth*) of these shrines are of the same class as those of the *kengo Nyakang*, viz. elderly women, often widows of the dead king, and old men, his former servants, or their descendants who have reached the requisite age, or, as a last resource when none of these can be found, old women or old men not specially connected with the dead king. Just as no one except the *bareth Nyakang* is allowed to enter the shrines of Nyakang, so no stranger may enter the royal grave shrines. A royal daughter never becomes a guardian of a shrine, but she may enter the grave shrine of her dead father and rub her hands on its floor for a blessing whenever she likes, as may the royal sisters. It seemed that these privileges did not extend to the shrines of other dead kings, nor even to the enclosed space around them. Should the spirit of a dead king appear to a royal daughter or sister in a dream and demand an offering, she would take a sheep to the guardians of the tomb and give it to one of them to sacrifice in the same way as a commoner. There are cattle belonging to the grave shrines of the kings, and offerings are made as at the shrines of Nyakang. Thus, when the millet crop threatens to fail, or epidemic sickness to attack the cattle, Nyakang or one of his successors will appear to someone in a dream and demand a sacrifice. This is told to the king, who will immediately send a cow and a bullock to one or more of the shrines

[1] So kings do not "die", but "go away", and in addressing the king a special court language is employed.

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

wives only during the dark half of the month.[1] We discussed this matter with Aker in 1921. When asked whether a married woman who became an *ajuago* would stay with her husband, Aker, with a pantomime of horror, replied that this would be impossible and that she must go and live in another house; if her husband approached her she would die. Nor should she have anything to do with other men. A male *ajuago* who wants children arranges for some other

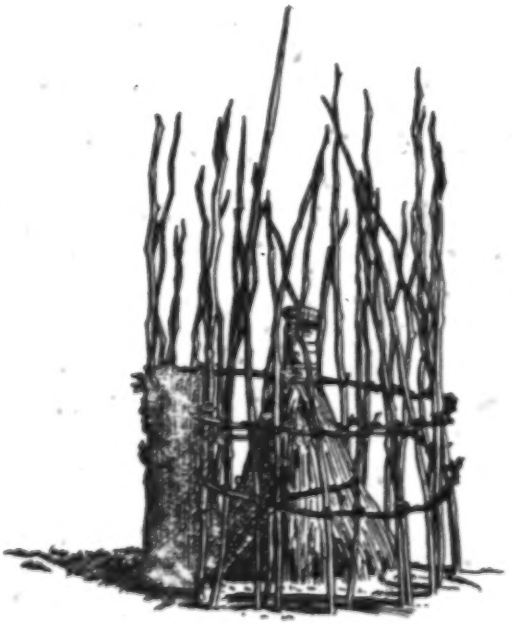

FIG. 9. Spirit hut.

man to have intercourse with his wife, i.e. all *ajuago* live celibate lives, indeed a male *ajuago* may give his cattle to a relative avowedly because he no longer requires them to procure a wife. It was explained that he would be physically afraid of approaching a woman, "the body shrinks" being a literal translation of the Arabic words used by our interpreter. The outward signs of possession were said to be specially strong with the waxing moon, weak or absent with the

[1] Seligman, *op. cit.*, 232

3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

1. Village scene 2. "House of Nyikang" 3. A Shilluk giant
4. Typical group of Shilluks; bodies covered with ashes; at the left a Shilluk dog

342
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3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

others one against the sun and his son; vide page 159.

When he felt his end approaching, he assembled all the chiefs of his kingdom for a splendid festival. While all were merry, suddenly a great wind arose, and scattered all those present. In this moment Nyikang took a cloth, wound it tightly round his neck, and thus choked himself.[1]

But many Shilluks firmly believe that Nyikang is still alive. The Rev. Oyler writes to me: "When I asked how Nyikang died, they were filled with amazement at my ignorance and stoutly maintained that he never died. If he dies, all the Shilluks will die. He, *Dāk*, and five other kings ascended to heaven, where Nyikang prays for the Shilluks (!). They say that he disappeared as the wind".

HOW NYIKANG IS ADORED.

Nyikang is the ancestor of the Shilluk nation and the founder of the Shilluk dynasty. He is worshipped, sacrifices and prayers are offered to him; he may be said to be lifted to the rank of a demi-god, though they never forget that he has been a real man. He is expressly designated as "little" in comparison with God.

In almost every village there is a little hut dedicated to Nyikang, or to some other ancient king. In form it is like the common houses, but much smaller and more slender. On its walls sometimes rough drawings in white, red, and black colour are seen, consisting simply in line-ornaments or representing animals. These drawings are made by women, with white, red and black earth, and are renewed every year before the chief prayers are offered. These huts are commonly called *kɛn ri̱t* "place of the king" i. e. of Nyikang. Besides these small huts they have a number of greater temples, which are in form like the Shilluk-hut, but of much larger size. They are found in most of the villages devoted to Nyikang. These "sacred villages" are, Akuruwar, Wau,[2] Fenyikang, Nyibodo (*Ñi̱bɔ̱dɔ̱*), *Otɔ̱ɲɔ̱*, Nyelwal, *Oshārɔ̱*, *Otigɔ̱*, *Dādigɔ̱*. These houses, the small as well as the larger, are the places where Nyikang is worshipped. In them, at least in some, a number of reliques are preserved, which are considered holy and are held in great veneration. Among these are a statue of Nyikang made of ambach-wood; the holy spear, drum, and shield of Nyikang, a digging stick, ancient metal ornaments and clothes, etc. Spoils from wars are also dedicated to Nyikang, and are preserved in the temples.

In times of need, when sickness or war are threatening, but above all when rain does not come in due time, the people assemble round the house of Nyikang and pray to him. This is done by dancing and at the same time singing prayers. At the beginning of the rainy season, when they are about to plant dura, the regular chief prayers take place; on this occasion an animal is slain as a sacrifice to Nyikang. Before the transaction of any serious business the elders of the village assemble around the temple of Nyikang, to ask for his counsel.

[1] Till the subjection of the Shilluks by the British all succeeding Shilluk kings have finished their lives by the same form of death.

[2] This Wau is not the place in the Bahr Ghasal Province, but is situated on the left bank of the White Nile between Tanfikia and Kodok.

776

Juok *Ficere*, means a whirlwind;
Juok *Nam*, " river spirit;
Juok *Acweci*, " creator;
Jame Juok, " things made by Juok such as food etc.;
Juok *Tim*, " wood spirit;
Juok *Ayim*, " protector.

Anything that cannot be understood is Juok. Juok is thus a plurality but he is also one spirit; he may be either good or bad, or neither, he is potentially all three. He may bring sickness, may protect people or he may merely stand aloof from human affairs. Certain diseases are specifically associated with him. The cult of Juok is not expressed in any external action or ritual; it is found in a few songs and prayers, and Juok is invoked only when appeals to the ancestors and to Nyikang fail. [753]

THE CULT OF NYIKANG

Nyikang is the hero of most of the Shilluk myths and traditions. He is the culture hero, founder of the nation, and the popular ideal, and though probably an historical person in the first instance, his acts and words have become sacralised in myths. The Shilluk regard him as a divine or semi-divine being. They say he did not die but disappeared in a whirlwind during a festival held at Akurwa. The spirit of Nyikang is supposed to be present in certain places, men and animals. Every *reth* at the moment of his installation, when sitting on the royal stool, is possessed by the spirit of Nyikang so that it is Nyikang who becomes king again (see above). The spirit of Nyikang is regarded as closely associated with certain shrines, which are regarded as his homesteads; in particular he is present, at certain times, in his effigy at Akurwa.

There are ten shrines of Nyikang in Shilluk country, the most important being at Akurwa and Fenyikang. Seligman describes them as a group of two or more huts, of the same circular form as dwelling-huts but slightly larger, enclosed in a fence of millet stalks. The huts are particularly well thatched and the apex of the roof terminates in an ostrich egg from which projects the blade of a spear.(1) The huts are taboo to all except the priests of Nyikang and the old people who tend them. The attendants and priests of the royal grave shrines and the shrines to Nyikang are known as *bareth*; they are the ex-wives of kings, people liable to epileptic fits (which are held to indicate possession by Nyikang or a dead king), and certain old men who appear, according to Seligman, to have a hereditary connection with the shrine. The *bareth* keep the shrine clean, receive the sacrifices and officiate at the ceremonies. They eat the meat of the sacrifices and drink the milk of the cattle belonging to the shrine.

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The worship of Nyikang at his various shrines consists of sacrifices and prayers. The two most important annual ceremonies are the rain-making ceremony, held just before the rains, and the harvest festival, when the millet is cut and first-fruits are offered to Nyikang. Each new *reth* should send cattle to each shrine of Nyikang and also various other presents. Offerings are given at the shrines when a person is sick so that Nyikang should make him well. Offerings and ceremonies invoking Nyikang's aid are

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(1) Seligman, *Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan*, 1932, p.77.

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944) 1946
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

175 643 648 had nothing to do except to warn the Shilluk that a *reth* chosen by violence would not be accepted by government.

643 During the interval between the death of a *reth* and the final installation of a successor the Shilluk lack, in a certain degree, their chief mediator with Nyikang and God, and the *reth*-elect lacks certain attributes of divinity, which are bestowed upon him later by Nyikang. Both parties express this inadequacy by certain prohibitions on their behaviour, many of which, in the case of the *reth* at any rate, are not signs of mourning but signs of respect to Nyikang, as they endure till his installation, and do not in all cases cease with the wake of the deceased. It is forbidden for Shilluk to light grass fires (except perhaps [688] along the drying marshes, by the river banks) between the death of one *reth* and the installation of his successor. Any offender is liable to a fine. There are two types of building among the Shilluk; walls 341 are built from mud alone laid in circular layers, or else a framework 643 of millet stalks is first erected and then packed with mud outside and in. The latter technique is regarded as inferior; the former is the royal or divine style of building. Fashoda is built like that, and all the shrines to Nyikang, *reths* and *nyireths* throughout the country. [174] Men of substance also build their houses after this fashion, and it seems as if this may have been the original traditional form of Shilluk building, and the other form is looked upon as something foreign. This royal style of building is forbidden in the same way as the burning of grass. It is said that the prohibition upon this royal style of building is a sign of respect to Nyikang; "you must not build in Nyikang's style, while Nyikang's houses are down". Nyikang's houses are not [778] actually thrown down, except the great shrine of Fanyikang, but [346] each shrine of Nyikang is rebuilt by each new *reth*, or should be; and there is a general feeling that there is a rebirth of the whole Nyikang tradition at the installation of a *reth*. During the period of the interregnum there is a general feeling that something has passed away from the Shilluk, and requires renewing by Nyikang's reappearance, and until Nyikang himself has come to renew his contact with the Shilluk the people mark the interval by abstaining from building in the way they associate with Nyikang. Building of the inferior style

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944) 1946
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

346
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THE FOURTH DAY OF THE INSTALLATION.
Nyikang and Dak go up into the mound Aturwic to make peace with the *reth*.

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643

THE FIFTH DAY : SPEECH DAY.
The *reth* comes down from Aturwic.
He is second from the left and dressed in a Mrs. Gray antelope skin, and behind him is the fan made from the wings of a Saddle-bill Stork.

[FACING p. 68]

27: Munro U-5 (1918) 1918 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

any ostrich they may meet will stand until they have plucked the requisite feathers. Further they are believed to produce Nyakang from the river by stabbing a cow in sacrifice on the bank of the Nile).

When all was ready, Nyakang started on its journey with a large following and proceeded at a leisurely pace. The road is cleared for it from Kaka to Fashoda. It passed Kodok on 11th January 1918.

As Nyakang draws near, the selected Ret is supposed to go to Dabalu in Akwom and stay there for one night before the actual ceremony. In this specific instance Fafiti went to Akwom three days before the ceremony and was installed in Fashoda on the 4th morning. Different chiefs gave varying answers as to the number of nights which it was essential for the Ret to stay in Dabalu : it would appear however that the Ret really goes there when everything is nearly ready; but if for any reason some delay occurs, a day or two is considered immaterial, which is in accordance with all native Sudan custom. In the present instance I understand Ajang wad Amoich of Akwom, whose duty it was had neglected to give due notice to the Southern chiefs, and so Kwa Mal [1] only arrived on the 16th instead of two days earlier.

B. — NARRATIVE (JANUARY 17TH, 1918).

I arrived Fashoda about 7.30 a.m. While waiting I examined the shrine of Nyakang [2] from outside, and the temporary huts [3] built for the Ret,

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[1] Kwa (descendants of) Mal stated by Westermann, p. 128 to be founded by a man and woman, who came down from above. They left children on earth : their home is Malakal. They receive from the Ret the black bull over which the Ret steps before crossing the Khor; this is their reward for whipping on any that dally in following the Ret.

[2] The shrine of Nyakang consists of two well built circular mud huts with grass roofs surmounted by an ostrich egg and a spear blade. The whole is enclosed in a fence. The grey mud walls are painted in different coloured stripes with spots dotted on them as shown in Seligman's illustration of Nyakang at Famikang fig. 55. The guardian is an old ex-wife of the Ret; small children are also allowed to enter. No woman who is pregnant can enter the shrine. The guardian has a little hut apart.

[3] About 30 yards distant there is a practical miniature of the shrine, a temporary building completely made of grass especially erected for the Ret to live in after the installation prior to his going up to his real house on the mound.

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

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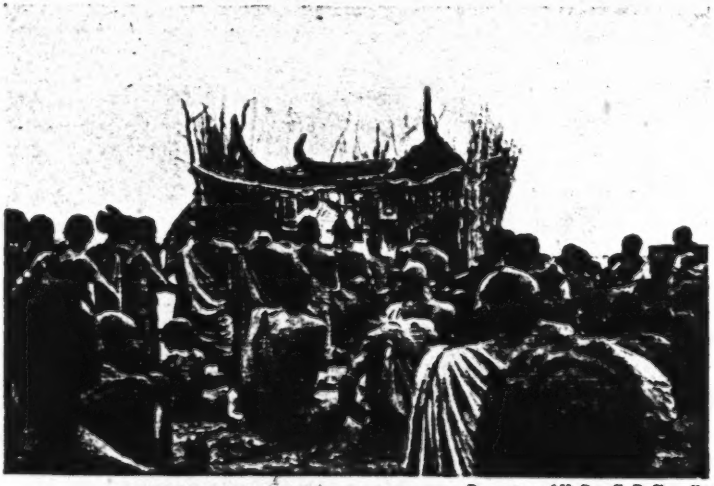
The Consecration

Note the fashions in hair-dressing. The soup-plate style is achieved by letting the hair grow long and stiffening it with clay



By courtesy of V. Rev. J. P. Kennelly

The Communion

Note the hair-style affected by the chap nearest the camera: little balls of red clay give this charming effect

Detwok Mission: Mass at Dêtwok village (Celebrant, Rev. Fr. Rowlands)

[facing p. 20]

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

difficult and weary travel, but they are hazy as to what kind of life is led in that country and suppose it to be but a continuation of the kind of life they know on this earth. Meanwhile the spirits which have not yet started on the journey to Pa Jwok hover round their graves and former homesteads and may do harm to their living relations, and a person who has died in enmity with anyone is greatly to be feared by his late enemy. All these spirits, therefore, have to be placated by offerings and sacrifices. Someone may be taken ill, and the anxious relatives call in the witch doctor to tell them which spirit is responsible for bringing this evil upon them. He consults his oracle, such as an empty calabash to which he listens intently, and then informs the people that Nyikang says such-and-such a one, recently dead, is responsible and that sacrifice and prayer must be offered to his spirit, and perhaps intercession and sacrifice is to be made at the grave of the sick person's dead father, that his spirit may prevail upon the malignant one to remove the curse from his family. Accordingly a sheep is led to the grave of the person to be placated. The right ear is cut off and washed in water and the water poured over the grave. Prayer is made both to God, Jwok-Atang (on such private occasions as this without the intercession of Nyikang), and to the dead person. Then the sheep is killed and the meat cooked. Some of the soup is poured over the grave and the meat is then eaten by those who have taken part in the sacrifice.

All former kings, and in some cases great chiefs, have their shrines. These shrines consist of two or three huts built in the usual Shilluk fashion but with much better thatching than that affected by the ordinary Shilluk and enclosed within a reed or thorn fence. As befitting the great spirit that dwells within, these shrines are kept in good repair and spotlessly clean by the duly appointed guardians. One such shrine is situated just a few hundred yards from the mission at Detwok. It consists of two large huts surrounded by a fence and is dedicated to Nyala, a woman, surprisingly enough. She was the daughter of the seventeenth

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

* 797 [643] them as to how they were to treat his friends, as he called the missionaries. Conditions improved after this, and also by the arrival in June of three Sisters of Verona, with Mother Guiseppa Scandola as Superior, to assist in the mission work. When Mother Guiseppa received orders to start for Lul, one of the Sisters in Assuan told her that she envied her good fortune in going to work in the mission. 'Do not worry,' she replied, 'in four months you will come to take my place.' Soon after her arrival in Lul, Father Beduschi became very ill and was at death's door, but Mother Guiseppa, who was herself ill at the time, sent him this message: 'Have no fear, Father; you will not die, you have hard work to do for the Shilluk. I am old and useless; I shall die in your stead.' Two days later, Father Beduschi, completely recovered, gave the last Sacraments to the Sister, and she died on September 1st. Her successor as Superior was the very Sister to whom she had made the prophecy in Assuan. She was a woman remarkable for her devotion and holiness. In this [643] [648] same year, too, the British Government deposed the king, Kur, whose successor, Fadiet, was much more friendly to the mission.

From this time onwards the number of Christians began to grow, and the mud hut which had served as a church was [346] replaced by a larger brick building in 1911. The priest who was Superior of Lul at that time was Father Banholzer, who was noted for his extensive knowledge of the Shilluk language and tribal customs and the untiring zeal with which he worked among the native people, so that many Shilluk remember him still as the 'Great Father'. One day in 1914 he shot a hippopotamus and was out in the sun for several hours dividing the meat, as a result of which he had an attack of sunstroke. He went to Kodok to be treated by the doctor, but died there in the arms of a native, and the first intimation of his death which his fellow priests at Lul received was the arrival of his body carried by natives in a boat.

[114] A successor of Father Banholzer was Father Kohnen, who wrote a Shilluk grammar and translated the New Testament and a Bible History into that language.

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

Another well-remembered figure is that of Mother Adalgesa who died in 1946 while still in the prime of life. She had been Mother Provincial in this mission for eight years after serving in Uganda for twelve. Her death was brought about by the long hours she spent in the sun treating those who sent for her aid during the epidemic of relapsing fever. She saved many lives and drew many souls to God by her self-sacrificing charity. She died in hospital in Malakal, thanking God that she was able to die in the mission and not in far-off Khartoum. 'It is only right,' she said, 'that I should die here among the Shilluk, since I have given my life for them.' When her body was brought to Lul for burial, the church was crowded with weeping people.

In 1929 the present convent was built, and later the Fathers' house was rebuilt and a school with five classrooms erected.

Other stations than Lul were gradually established as the work among the Shilluk was extended. In 1904 a mission was opened at Tonga, the site originally given by the king. Father Beduschi was the first Superior, but success was very slow, and after ten years or so he went to work in Uganda. It was not until 1923 that a third mission was established, this time near the village of Detwok, from which it takes its name. The funds for its foundation came from a group of Milanese Catholics who wished to assist a mission in Central Africa, preferably among the Shilluk people. Father Beduschi was recalled to become the first Superior of the new foundation; he was well fitted for it, being well acquainted with the language and customs of the people, but having seen the difference between the people in Uganda and the Shilluk he returned to the scene of his former labours very unwillingly and with great misgivings. On his very last day in Tonga a spear had been thrown at him in an attempt on his life. He went with Father Brambilla and a laybrother, Brother Joshua, who had helped him in the foundation of Tonga and had been there since 1904; their first task was to build huts to serve as house, church and school. The same hostility on the part of the natives met them as it had in Lul and Tonga, and

*797
291
●346
516

Photo: Fr. F. Spitzmüller

Sisters' Convent, Detwok. Sister gives catechism class

[facing p. 116]

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

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759
346

Photo: Fr. F. Spakauskas

Sister Infirmarian gives an injection at Detwok

[facing p117]

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

Chapter XIII

BUILDING

* 797 Not one of the least headaches of a priest working in the foreign mission is the provision of the buildings he needs for his work. It is the great desire of every priest, of course, to have a church as beautiful and seemly as he can; in addition, he must for health's sake provide himself and the Sisters who may be working in the mission with him with well-built houses; there are also school buildings, teachers' houses and perhaps a hospital or dispensary to be constructed. There are no architects to be called on for plans, no contractors to be engaged to do the work; out of very slender resources, and with whatever ingenuity he can summon to his task, he has to do his best with what lies to his hand. I will try to describe to you, then, a session of building as it is conducted in one of our Sudan missions.

During the rainy season, as can be expected, nothing in the building line is possible, but with the end of the rains the mission begins to move with a little more liveliness than it has been able to do during the previous few months; to scrape the clogging masses of mud from its boots, to hang its waterlogged garments out to dry. Indeed if all goes well the place in a very short time will be a bustling hive of industry. For with the assurance that the last shower has fallen, the missionary begins to put into action the plans that have been maturing during the previous months. The school is expanding and new classrooms must be built; more huts must go up to accommodate the increasing number of scholars; he is getting a new teacher and must provide him with a house. Furthermore, he has noted with grave concern the dilapidated state to which many of the present buildings have been reduced. To build on cotton soil, lay the foundations as deep and as wide as you will, is as thankless and as

* 797
346

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

unsatisfying a task as to build on sand. With no solid and permanent base on which to rest, a building after two or three rainy seasons begins to move and sink, and so the missionary ruefully surveys the ominous cracks that have already appeared in the walls of school buildings that only two years ago were his pride and joy. Windows and doors have warped and white ants have already wrought havoc in the woodwork. All the mud buildings need to be replastered without and limewashed within and the thatched roofs of many of them must be renewed. The Sisters' convent is in a bad way, although they, good souls, never complain; however, if something is not done about the back wall this year, it may be that they will be past complaining. And the church, too; but that is really beyond repair. It should be pulled down and rebuilt, but when and how, and who is expert enough to do it, and what he is going to use for money to pay for it, the missionary has not the slightest idea. In the meantime he hopes devoutly that the pictures on the walls will continue to hold the cracks together for another year or two.

The immediate task, however, is brickmaking. He must try to get a hundred thousand bricks made this year so that he will be able to satisfy his present requirements and leave a margin for further operations next year. Well, one thing about the Upper Nile is that it provides him with plenty of material for making bricks, namely, mud. Still, the stuff has to be dug and puddled and moulded into the right shape and size and then built into a kiln and fired. So the word goes forth among the Shilluk that there is a job of work to be done up at the mission and that applications for appointments as soil diggers, water carriers, sand carriers, mud puddlers and brickmakers and, later on, as kiln builders, furnace tenders, brick carriers, pole fetchers, roof makers, grass carriers and thatchers, will be given every consideration. The invitations, I say, go out, but the Shilluk as a rule is in no hurry to come in. And if his crop of grain has been good, he probably won't respond at all. What does that crazy white man up at the mission think that he, the Shilluk, is?

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

high at the apex. Its construction takes two bricklayers a full fortnight, and then another week is required to build up the bricks on the foundation, six men piling row upon row on edge in a herringbone pattern that leaves plenty of space for the flames to penetrate. Thirty thousand bricks are thus built up into a solid block some nine feet high, and the whole mass is plastered with mud to seal off all the cracks in the walls.

Meanwhile, the District Commissioner, who had promised to use his good offices in procuring sufficient wood for burning the bricks, has been as good as his word, and one day a steamer arrives bringing one hundred and fifty cubic metres of firewood. It looks a small pile when dumped on the shore, but its transport to the brickfield presents a formidable problem when the only wheeled vehicle available is a rickety handcart. Yet if it isn't moved soon, its transport will present no problem at all; the Shilluk will see to that. Fortunately the District Commissioner solves that difficulty too, for he arrives by lorry shortly after the wood, and kindly gives the harassed priest the loan of truck and driver to bring the wood from the river. A strenuous day's work sees the job done and the wood neatly stacked in two piles, one on each side of the kiln.

It is now the end of January. The brickmakers are well into the second fifty thousand bricks, the walls of the six new huts are finished and the construction of the roofs is well in hand. Grass rope is still required, but the number of roofing poles required is now complete and the demand now is for millet stalks. Women come in from the fields bearing huge bundles of them on their heads, and wait patiently until busy Pooh-Bah has time to attend to them. The swamps are emptying rapidly with the fall of the river and in another month the grass will be drying out ready for cutting. The work is going well and is keeping up to the time-table, but all this has not been accomplished in complete harmony and smoothness. The same relentless vigilance has to be kept up day after day to keep the indolent up to scratch; disputes break out among the workmen and often sounds of strife at

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

* 797 339 forest is too far away to make wood carrying from there an economical proposition, so he has to fall back on what resources the mission can offer. A squad goes off armed with saws and axes to attack the leafy avenue of trees which line the road to the river. The operation is euphemistically called 'pruning', but by the time it is completed and the Father's wood hunger is satisfied, the trees present a sad and sorry appearance. However, they will recover, and anyhow he can't afford to shed a sentimental tear over their appearance with sixty thousand bricks yet at stake.

With the breaking down of the brick kiln, revealing the rows of lovely bricks, those on the top and sides baked a golden brown, and the centre ones red and blue, the real work of the season begins; the rebuilding of the Sisters' convent and the erection of the new schoolrooms and the
* 797 teacher's house. This is a task beyond the amateur capabilities of our Pooh-Bah, but expert assistance is at hand. One of the Prefecture staff is an authority on building, and he, accompanied by a Brother, arrives on the postboat, having been snatched from his labours in some other mission to start the work here. Scaffolding is erected round the dangerous wall and with consummate skill the expert directs the operation of pulling down the wall in sections, planning to rebuild one portion before passing on to the destruction and rebuilding of the next. The Brother meanwhile is setting out the foundations of the other buildings. The Reverend man-of-all-work, however, has little time to pause and admire such dexterity, for the unceasing daily round still claims his attention. The second kiln is nearing completion, and must be fired as soon as possible, and the first one, now being rapidly demolished, has to be rebuilt with the remaining mud bricks, about another thirty thousand, and fired again.
[437] He is still a one-man purchasing board for the produce of the district, but now the grass rope and millet stalks have given way to bundles of grass for thatching and the work of
● [340] thatching the new huts and some of the old ones has already started.

So far, apart from minor hitches, accidents and squabbles,

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

797
346

Moral support at Detwok Dispensary

[facing p. 148]